



THIS MONTH SEPTEMBER 2015



The Last Stand

MATTHEW R. SCOTT
Chief, Safety and Occupational Health Office
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers – Mobile District, Mobile, Alabama

It was October in south Mississippi, and the weekend was upon us. For some, it was probably no different than any other weekend. For others, however, it signaled the beginning of something we'd looked forward to all summer — hunting season!

Like every other hunter, I couldn't wait for another chance to bag a big buck. To ensure I was prepared, I set out all the gear I'd need for the morning, inspected my climbing stand, put a coat of wax on my bow strings and sharpened my broadheads. I had practiced enough

that I was sure I could hit a target at 30-plus yards. Everything was great, except the weather. The forecast called for severe thunderstorms and heavy rain throughout the night and into early morning. Still, I held out hope the forecast was wrong.

The following morning, my dad and I awoke to find that, sure enough, it was pouring outside. This was both good and bad. Even though I wanted to be in the woods at first light, I knew the deer would start moving right after the rain passed. We decided to wait a few hours for the weather to clear.

As expected, the rain subsided a few hours later and we ventured into the woods. I had the perfect spot picked out along an old fence line with oaks on one side and short pines on the other. I'd seen plenty of deer here in the past and was sure this year wouldn't be any different. I found a pine tree I'd previously used with my stand while my dad headed for a spot about 200 yards away.

I climbed the tree and then hoisted my bow with the rope I had attached to the stand. I sat there for about a half hour without any luck. The only thing I heard was

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"So there I was about 25 feet above the ground with my legs hanging."

water droplets falling from the trees and hitting the ground. The woods were saturated, as was the tree I had climbed. I wasn't concerned, though, because I'd climbed wet trees in the past and never had any trouble — that is until this day.

I stood up and must have bumped the bottom piece of my stand. Since the tree was wet, the stand didn't have much traction, so down it went followed by me. Fortunately, I didn't fall far because I had my safety harness attached to the tree. The bottom of my stand

didn't go far either because of the rope I had attached between the two pieces. I was able to pull myself back up to the top piece and sit down. However, as I pulled up the bottom, the rope snapped and the stand fell to the ground.

So there I was about 25 feet above the ground with my legs hanging. At least I was sitting down, but it didn't take long for my legs to fall asleep and go numb. Luckily, my dad wasn't too far away. I contacted him over the two-way radios we'd brought with us and informed him of my

predicament. Within a few minutes he was there and, with his assistance, I was able to get out of the tree safely.

Once on the ground, many questions went through my mind. What if I hadn't secured my safety harness? What if my dad hadn't joined me? What if we hadn't brought those two-way radios? Thankfully, none of these what-ifs happened. Since I had on my safety harness, I was able to hunt the rest of that day and many more since. If not for my safety harness, I would have fallen for sure. That hunting trip taught me a very valuable lesson I will never forget — always put safety first. Be careful out there! ■

FYI

There are many ways to ensure you stay safe when using a treestand. Here are a few guidelines from the Treestand Manufacturer's Association:

- Always wear a fall-arrest system/full-body harness meeting TMA standards, even during ascent and descent. Be aware that single-strap belts and chest harnesses are no longer recommended and should not be used. Failure to use an FAS could result in serious injury or death.

- Never exceed the weight limit specified by the manufacturer. If you have any questions after reviewing the warnings and instructions, please contact the manufacturer.

- Always read and understand the manufacturer's warnings and instructions before using the treestand each season. Practice with the treestand at ground level prior to using at elevated positions. (Editor's note: Maintain the warnings

and instructions for later review. If you loan your stand to a buddy or decide to sell it, being able to pass along those documents will be both helpful and appreciated.)

- Always inspect the treestand and FAS for signs of wear or damage before each use. Contact the manufacturer for replacement parts. Destroy all products that cannot be repaired by the manufacturer and/or exceed the recommended expiration date (or if the manufacturer no longer exists). The FAS should be discarded and replaced after a fall has occurred.

- Always practice in your full-body harness in the presence of a responsible adult prior to using it in an elevated hunting environment. The goal is to learn what it feels like to hang suspended in it at ground level and how to properly use your suspension relief device.

- Always attach your full-body harness in the manner and method described by the manufacturer.

Failure to do so may result in suspension without the ability to recover into your treestand. Be aware of the hazards associated with full-body harnesses and the fact that prolonged suspension in a harness may be fatal. Have in place a plan for rescue, including the use of cellphones or signal devices that may be easily reached and used while suspended. If rescue personnel cannot be notified, you must have a plan for recovery/escape. If you have to hang suspended for a period of time before help arrives, exercise your legs by pushing against the tree or doing any other form of continuous motion or use your suspension relief device. Failure to recover in a timely manner could result in serious injury or death. If you do not have the physical ability to recover/escape, hunt from the ground.

- Always hunt with a plan and, if possible, a buddy. Before you leave home, let others know your



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exact hunting location, when you plan to return and who is with you.

- Always carry emergency signal devices such as a cellphone, walkie-talkie, whistle, signal flare, personal locator device and flashlight on your person at all times and within reach, even while you are suspended in your FAS. In the event of an accident, remain calm and seek help immediately.

- Always watch for changing weather conditions.

- Always select the proper tree for use with your treestand. Select a live, straight tree that fits within the size limits recommended in your treestand's instructions. Do not climb or place a treestand against a leaning tree. Never leave a treestand installed for more than

two weeks since damage could result from changing weather conditions and/or from other factors not obvious with a visual inspection.

- Always use a haul line to pull up your gear and unloaded firearm or bow to your treestand once you have reached your desired hunting height. Never climb with anything in your hands or on your back. Prior to descending, lower your equipment on the opposite side of the tree.

- Always know your physical limitations. Don't take chances. Do not climb when using drugs or alcohol or if you're sick or unrested. If you start thinking about how high you are, don't go any higher.

- Never use homemade or permanently elevated stands or make modifications to a

purchased treestand without the manufacturer's written permission.

Only purchase and use treestands and FASs meeting or exceeding TMA standards. For a detailed list of certified products, contact the TMA office or refer to the TMA website at <http://www.tmastands.com>.

- Never hurry! While climbing with a treestand, make slow, even movements of no more than 10-12 inches at a time. Make sure you have proper contact with the tree and/or treestand every time you move. On ladder-type treestands, maintain three points of contact with each step.

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HERE IT COMES



- Treat every weapon as if it is loaded.
- Handle every weapon with care.
- Identify the target before you fire.
- Never point the muzzle at anything you don't intend to shoot.
- Keep the weapon on safe and your finger off the trigger until you intend to fire.

READY ...OR NOT?

Ready ... or Not is a call to action for leaders, Soldiers, Army Civilians and Family members to assess their "readiness" for what lies ahead—the known as well as the unknown.

Throughout our professional and personal lives, events happen all around us. We are often able to shape the outcome of those events, but many times we're not. Navigating life's challenges is all about decision-making.

So are **YOU** ready ... or not?



<https://safety.army.mil>



Let's Switch

1ST ARMORED DIVISION
Fort Bliss, Texas

Author's note: The following story was written by a Soldier-rider and is true. The events are retold to give insights into the many hazards riders face when they are on the road. The lessons will help us all become more experienced motorcycle riders.

A few years ago, a friend of mine who is a very experienced rider and has spent a lot of effort practicing motorcycle safety was on a group ride in the Pacific Northwest. At the time, he was riding a new Polaris Can-Am Spyder. He and a buddy, who was on a new Triumph sport bike, decided to switch rides at a fuel stop (his first mistake). Less than five miles later, a truck without brake lights suddenly slowed ahead of group. My friend over-braked on this unfamiliar bike (his second mistake), did two or three stoppies and then a forward flip. His Aerostich riding gear did a great job protecting him, but he did suffer enough damage to both hands to require multiple surgeries and almost a year of recuperation.

Unfortunately for my friend, this accident had a huge impact on his job because he is a writer. It was tough on his wife and children, too, as there were many things he couldn't do for himself while he recovered. He was also forced to cancel a long-planned summer vacation with his son so he could have one of his several surgeries. He never imagined all of this could be the result of just switching rides.



In the months following the accident, my friend spent a lot of time thinking about his risk matrix. He commented at one point that, "There is no such thing as absolute safety, but I definitely need to hone my risk-reduction skills and tactics. Crashing just soaks up too much money, time and my wife's energy." This was from a guy who has ridden far more miles than 99 percent of us ever will and devoted innumerable hours thinking about how to do it as safely as possible. From this accident, he learned to never change motorcycles in the middle of a ride.

I tell this story to remind us

all to review our own risk matrix every time we mount a bike. This matrix should reflect the lessons we have garnered from our training, experience and any pertinent writings we've absorbed. We should also think about the mistakes we've commonly made. Not looking far enough ahead is my most common mistake.

What errors do you make while riding? Have you come up with any solutions to correct them? If not, I urge you to do so as soon as possible. Remember, reviewing your risk matrix can go a long way toward reducing the odds of an accident and its consequences. Ride safe! ■

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Indiscipline in the Air

CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER 4 STEPHEN KREKELBERG
B Company, 6th Battalion, 52nd Aviation Regiment,
U.S. Army Reserve, Fort McCoy, Wisconsin

Thursday, Aug. 23, 2001, marked four months since I had departed active duty to pursue a career as an airline pilot. I'd been an Army aviator for 12 years, all rotary-wing time. That summer, I'd enrolled in an airline career pilot training program with a nationally recognized flight school and had earned my fixed-wing, multi-engine, instrument and commercial ratings. I was in the process of preparing for my multi-engine flight instructor rating check ride, which was scheduled for the following week.

That morning, I flew a Piper Seminole from Jacksonville, Florida, to Fort Lauderdale/Hollywood International Airport (KFL) to drop off two student pilots from our school who had check rides scheduled there that afternoon. My co-pilot, Chris, was another student at the school who was also in the airline career program. While our colleagues flew their check rides, Chris and I found some friends in the coffee shop at the FBO and joined them for lunch.

We were introduced to another pilot, Luis, who had a job as pilot for a private airplane owner flying a Piper Seneca under Part 91 rules.

"It also found Luis had falsified his logbooks to get the charter job and had traces of alcohol and cocaine in his blood."



He informed us this was his last day because he was beginning a new job as a Part 135 Cessna 402/404 charter pilot with Blackhawk International Airways. As we finished lunch, Luis said he had the use of his boss' Seneca for one last day and asked if we wanted to join him on a final flight up the south Florida coastline. Chris and I agreed to go and the three of us walked directly out on the ramp and over to the Seneca. I asked Luis if he needed to file a flight plan or check weather. He just smiled, pointed to the sunny skies and asked, "Why?"

Luis unlocked the plane and we boarded, with Chris in the right seat and me in the back seat. I expected to see Luis do a preflight check, but

he simply got in the plane without even a walk-around. I asked him about a preflight and he told me he'd already flown the plane that morning. Without using a checklist, Luis started the engines and called ground for taxi. We received a taxi clearance for runway 9R. As we taxied toward the runway, Chris asked Luis if he wanted him to read the checklist. Luis replied, "No thanks, bro. I've got it memorized." He did some cursory procedures, which I presumed to be taxi and before-takeoff checks, as we taxied.

Upon reaching the runway, tower issued us a clearance to take off on Runway 9R, maintain a heading of 090 and remain below 500 feet on initial climb out. At KFL, there are two parallel runways, 9L and 9R. Runway 9L is on the north and is the larger of the two, accommodating the big commercial aircraft. When we took off, Luis continued to climb through 500 feet AGL and turned 90 degrees to the left, following the beach to



the north. He also turned into the path of departing traffic from 9L.

As we climbed through 1,000 feet, the tower immediately transmitted, "Seneca, I cleared you for heading 090 and 500 feet! Descend now! Maintain 360 heading!" The tower controller was female, and Luis replied, "I am descending. Don't get your panties in a bunch."

I was astonished when tower did not reply with instructions to call an FAA phone number upon landing. Instead, she gave a frequency for Miami approach for flight following. Luis read back the frequency, but did not check in.

At that point, we were flying parallel to the beach, about 100 yards out from the shoreline. Luis initiated a descent, but did not level off at 500 feet altitude. We continued to descend all the way down to 100 feet AGL, basically buzzing the beach at Fort Lauderdale. By this time, I had seen enough and just wanted to get out of the plane alive and not under investigation. I told Luis he was in violation of Part 91, minimum safe altitude of 500 feet over water, and told him to climb. He smiled and said, "I thought you wanted a ride."

I replied I was an Army Black Hawk pilot and familiar with low-level flight performed correctly. I told him to turn around, climb and take us back to KFL. Luis executed a low-level 55-degree bank turn back to the south and climbed to 500 feet altitude. He contacted tower and was cleared to return to the airport and land on Runway 9R.

As we taxied back to the ramp, I scanned the vicinity for FAA sedans or a police car. We parked and I told Luis it had been a hair-

raising experience. Chris and I then walked away from the plane as fast as we could. I remember turning to Chris and saying, "Luis is going to kill somebody one day."

Two days later, on Saturday, Aug. 25, 2001, R&B singer Aaliyah, her entourage of seven and all of their equipment loaded onto a Cessna 402 in the Bahamas. Immediately after takeoff, the plane crashed into a marsh adjacent the runway. There were no survivors. Luis was the pilot.

The National Transportation Safety Board investigation determined the aircraft was mechanically sound at the time of the accident, but was "substantially overloaded and well outside weight and balance limits." It also found Luis had falsified his logbooks to get the charter job and had traces of alcohol and cocaine in his blood.

Luis was the most extreme example of indiscipline in aviation I have ever encountered. The consequences of his indiscipline were predictable and tragic. When I confronted him on his indiscipline that day, I was concerned for my own hide. Whether I could have prevented the accident that happened two days later, I'll never know. In hindsight, I should have called the FSDO that afternoon and reported him as a reckless pilot. As a professional aviator, that was my duty.

Eighteen months later, I was an instructor at the same flight school in Jacksonville. I heard rumors that one of my colleagues had a habit of performing aileron rolls, a prohibited aerobatic maneuver, with his students in the Seminole. I approached one of his students and



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she confirmed it was true. I was on the phone with our chief pilot in less than five minutes. My colleague was fired and the FAA was notified. A few of my other colleagues were furious with me and accused me of being a snitch. I never gave it a second thought. I wasn't about to have another crash on my conscience.

Our passengers trust us and put their lives in our hands every time they get on our aircraft. Safety is a duty that goes beyond just our own conduct. Every aviator has a duty to intervene and interrupt the accident chain. We owe it to our profession and to the passengers who put their faith in us. ■



'Most' is not enough

CAPT. MATTHEW B. STEWART
B Company, 1108th Theater Aviation Sustainment Maintenance Group
Mississippi Army National Guard, Yazoo City, Mississippi

Growing up in the South, I operated tractors on a regular basis. I always thought the seat belt and rollover protective structure were so stupid. Why would you need all that safety stuff on a tractor that's only traveling a few miles per hour? After hearing the details of an unfortunate tractor mishap, I quickly changed my tune.

A teenager in a town where I'd once lived was using a rotary cutter to clip the grass in a field. He was apparently driving too fast when he ran over a stump, which caused the tractor to bounce. The teen was thrown to the ground and the clipper ran over him, severing his legs and causing him to bleed to death. Had he been wearing a seat belt, he'd still be alive today. This accident really hit home and convinced me I'd been wrong about the importance of my tractor's safety equipment.

Fast forward to a few years later when I was doing prep work for the upcoming deer hunting season. We had recently purchased some land neighboring our property and I was using my tractor to enlarge an already-established field edged with bamboo and tall grass that bordered a large creek on one side. I was wearing my seat belt and had the roll bar up and locked into place, but I started the task without first conducting a recon of the area. That mistake was almost my last.

After several passes by the creek, I decided to make one more run to put the finishing touches on my work. Because I hadn't reconned the area, I wasn't aware of a washed



out spot that extended into the field. My left-front tire fell into the washout and the tractor nearly overturned. Had it, I would have likely ended up in the creek.

Fortunately, I'd been thinking slowly enough that I was able to stop the tractor before it went any farther into the washout. I then used the front-end loader in conjunction with the four-wheel drive to work my way out of the situation. Afterward, I was able to finish my work without injury to myself or damage to the tractor.

While I thought I was doing everything right that day by wearing my seat belt and using a roll bar, my failure to conduct a proper route recon before I started working could have easily cost me my life.

FYI

In an effort to reduce injuries and fatalities, the Kubota Tractor Corporation offers the following 10 Commandments of Tractor Safety:

1. Know your tractor, its implements and how

As Soldiers, we're expected to incorporate safety into everything we do. In case you haven't realized, there is a reason we wear eye and ear protection, use ground guides, conduct rollover training, wear seat belts and perform route recons. It helps keep us safe! We must learn that these safety measures apply to our off-duty activities as well.

Remember, there are no shortcuts in safety. What if I had conducted a recon of the area but didn't wear my safety glasses? While I would have avoided the wash out, I could have lost an eye had I taken a tree branch to the face. Doing most is not enough. We must be thorough and perform all the necessary safety steps to prevent an accident. ■

they work. Please read and understand the operator's manual(s) before operating the equipment. Also, keep your equipment in good condition.

2. Use ROPS (rollover protection structure) and a seat belt whenever and wherever applicable. If your



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tractor has a foldable ROPS, fold it down only when absolutely necessary and fold it up and lock it again as soon as possible. Do not wear the seat belt when the ROPS is folded. Most tractor fatalities are caused by overturns.

3. Be familiar with your terrain and work area. Walk the area first to identify any debris or obstacles that could hinder your ability to drive safely. Use special caution on slopes, slow down for all turns and stay off the highway whenever possible.

4. Never start an engine in a closed shed or garage. Exhaust gas contains carbon monoxide, which is colorless, odorless and deadly.

5. Always keep your PTO (power

take-off) properly shielded. Make it a habit to walk around your tractor and PTO-driven implement, never over, through or between the tractor and implement, particularly if either is running. The PTO rotates with enough speed and strength to kill you.

6. Keep your hitches low and always on the drawbar. Otherwise, your tractor might flip over backward.

7. Never get off a moving tractor or leave it with its engine running. Shut it down before leaving the seat. A runaway tractor can be extremely dangerous.

8. Never refuel while the engine is running or hot. Additionally, do not add coolant to the radiator

while the engine is hot. Hot coolant can erupt and scald.

9. Keep all children off and away from your tractor and its implements at all times. Children are generally attracted to tractors and the work they do. However, a tractor's work is not child's play. Remember, a child's disappointment is fleeting, while your memory of his or her injury or death resulting from riding the tractor with you, or being too close, will last a lifetime.

10. Never be in a hurry or take chances about anything you do with your tractor. Think safety first, then take your time and do it right.

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- Get plenty of rest
- Complete a TRIPS assessment

READY ...OR NOT?

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So are **YOU** ready ... or not?



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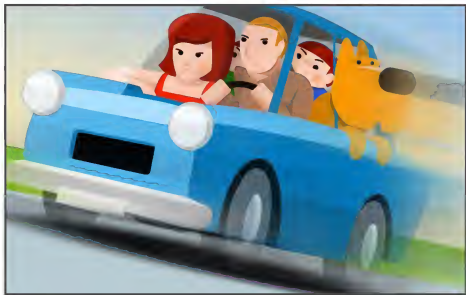


Mr. Extra-Cautious

SGT. 1ST CLASS OTTIS B. CRAWFORD
A Company, 1st Battalion, 7th Field Artillery Regiment
Cleveland, Tennessee

As many parents can relate, having multiple children and the sibling rivalries that go with it can be distracting at times — especially when you're driving. I pride myself for being very careful when behind the wheel of any vehicle and always ensure every passengers' seat belt is properly buckled. So, as you can imagine, I was completely beside myself when I, of all people, "Mr. Cautious," not only got into an accident, but did it with my three young children in the back seat.

There I was, driving down the highway and trying to find a restaurant. It was 11 a.m. and I had just left the fitness center where my children attended swimming lessons. They had worked very hard at their lessons that morning so, of course, they were tired and hungry. Some of you know all too well how that combination results in three very irritable



children. Before I took them home for their afternoon nap, I wanted to grab them something quick to eat. I had just spotted a restaurant I thought they'd like when they started yelling at each other, kicking the back of the seats and hollering things like, "Dad, John touched me!"

Between the busy morning, the

kids acting up and the heavy traffic flow, you can imagine not only how shot my nerves were at this point, but, more importantly, how distracted I was from the road. We were traveling about 30 mph and traffic was flowing steadily when I turned my head for a split second to tell the kids to cut it out. When I turned my attention back to the road, however, I was shocked to see traffic had come to a stop.

I tried slowing down as much as possible, but immediately realized I wasn't going to be able to stop, so I pulled into the turning lane to the right in an attempt to avoid rear-ending the vehicle ahead. Unfortunately, I didn't quite make it, and the front-left corner of my vehicle struck the other vehicle's right-rear bumper, causing my seat belt to tighten when I jerked forward.

"This was the first accident my children had ever been in, so they were terrified. I followed the other driver to the nearest safe location and immediately exited the vehicle to check each of my children for injuries."



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This was the first accident my children had ever been in, so they were terrified. I followed the other driver to the nearest safe location and immediately exited the vehicle to check each of my children for injuries. Satisfied that they were all OK, I then went to the other driver to ensure he hadn't suffered any injuries.

I called the local police department and asked that they send out an officer so we could file a formal report. As I was giving the officer my statement and insurance information, local paramedics arrived on the scene and double-checked everyone for injuries. Fortunately, the accident had only given us a scare and no one was hurt.

Before leaving the scene, the police officer had a talk with my kids about the importance of not distracting their mother or father while they're driving. He then pulled me aside to talk about my decision-making once I had realized traffic had stopped. He told me had I not reacted in the manner I did, the accident could have been much worse. He informed me that not only would there have been extensive damage to both vehicles, but all of us would have likely sustained injuries. He left me with a pat on the shoulder and a friendly reminder to drive safely.

There is only one thing that could have prevented this accident. Regardless of the police officer's opinion about my decisions throughout the course of the accident, the fact of the matter is I should have never taken my eyes off the road. There will always be distractions on the road, but taking your eyes off it for even a split second could result in an accident. I learned this the hard way. Just because we avoided injury this time doesn't mean we'll be so lucky in the future. Therefore, Mr. Cautious has now turned into Mr. Extra-Cautious. ■



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Bucket List COMPILED BY THE KNOWLEDGE STAFF

Not long after I completed readiness level progression at my National Guard unit I received a call to join another Black Hawk crew on a state active-duty mission fighting fires near the Canadian border. My experience with the Bambi Bucket consisted of maybe a half-dozen dips and drops during my initial qualification, so I was relieved to hear I would be flying with a maintenance test pilot who was one of our most experienced senior warrant officers.

The long flight to the fire was largely uneventful. We met our sister aircraft at the civilian staging airfield to get briefed by the ground firefighters and aerial controller before setting up the buckets and starting the operation. The winds were exceptionally strong that day on the Northern Plains, making the grass fire spread too quickly for ground crews to contain. Before we had arrived, a civilian contract helicopter had been working the fire, but the pilot decided to park it after determining the wind gusts were too strong for his light aircraft. Still well within our aircraft limits, we decided to work the fire until either the winds picked up, we ran out of daylight or we reached our duty-day limits.

Under the direction of the aerial controller who was circling overhead in an airplane, we were directed to several bodies of water surrounding the fire and selected a downwind dip site that was clear of smoke. It was at this point,

as the crew began discussing how cool what we were about to do really was, we discovered the only person in the aircraft to have previously worked an actual fire was one of the crew chiefs.

As a newly minted pilot, I had not considered complacency to be something I needed to worry about until years later in my career.



In that moment, however, I quickly realized my trust in the experience of my PC had let me take the attitude of just being along for the ride. With the exception of our first pass on the fire, where our flight path was a bit too low and brought us through thick smoke, the first day was a success. We honed our approach angles, dipping sites and dropping techniques, leading to a positive debrief with the firefighters that evening.

The next morning was similarly windy and brought more of the

same. With the fire so close to good dipping sites, we were able to go from dip to drop in the matter of minutes. After several bags of gas and miles of grass fire extinguished, the second day was coming to a close. Our sister ship had just returned to the staging airfield for the night, and we were being directed by the aerial controller to

mop up hotspots which had flared up in the already-extinguished area.

For most of the afternoon, we had been using a great dip site downwind of the fire. It was deep, had great references for a solid hover and was free of trees, letting us stay above effective translational lift throughout the dip. That day, we had made about 80 dips at this site, always departing with a full bucket in the direction of the wind and returning light with the wind to our backs. All day we had tightened up our downwind-to-



“But something felt different this time. It felt like the bottom began to drop out and we started sinking — fast!”

base and base-to-final turns due to the 30-plus-knot winds pushing our patterns farther from the dip site. Tightening our turns made our patterns more efficient, and due to light aircraft going into the dip and strong headwinds on final, our approaches were safe and stable.

All of this changed when our aerial controller asked us to hit a hotspot on the downwind side of our dip site. This drop was on our way back to the stage airfield and would be our last of the day. As we took off out of the dip site, everything was normal. We departed into the wind and proceeded to make our crosswind and downwind turns after we had gained airspeed. What happened next took the whole crew by surprise, yet it should not have.

As we passed the hotspot out our left door, we began slowing down to make the base turn as we had done countless times into the dip site. But something felt different this time. It felt like the bottom began to drop out and we started sinking — fast! We had not taken into account that we now had a full bucket of water hanging below us. Due to the sustained winds and our dip/drop locations, this was the first time all day we were at an out-of-ground-effect hover with a full bucket of water.

As we pulled in power to arrest our descent, it became clear we did not have enough power margin to overcome the rate of descent before hitting the ground. As I reached for the hook release button, I heard our seasoned crew chief say these precious words seconds before impact, “Dumping, dumping, dumping.” Immediately, our crisis was over. We credit that crew chief with saving our bacon that day. If I had released the water bucket, not only would it have been stuck in a muddy marsh miles from the nearest city, it likely would have been destroyed from the impact.

The list of factors that led to our adventure that day is long

and distinguished, but all of them were avoidable. During the mission brief, crew mix could have considered more than pairing a low-hour pilot with a high-hour pilot; recency of experience and expertise on the specific mission task is vitally important as well. Including a candid discussion of inexperience at this task in the crew brief could have heightened crew coordination and pointed out specific things to note such as the wind conditions in relation to OGE hover and the necessity to rely on the airspeed indicator instead of visual cues to determine when we would transition through ETL. On the problematic downwind to base leg that day, we went through ETL at about 50 knots groundspeed. We learned a lot about crew mix that day, along with proficiency with the task at hand and how aviation always has a few surprises to share with you. ■

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Driver's Training Toolbox

<https://safety.army.mil/drivertrainingtoolbox/>





The Third Law

STAFF SGT. SHANE MILLER
Clarksville, Tennessee

Soldiers determined to improve their physical conditioning while pushing the limits and having fun took to the woods of Tennessee on mountain bikes. All preventive maintenance checks, pre-combat checks and test rides were completed on man and machine. All were in full working order.

The Soldiers were shielded from the environment by all the personal protective equipment they could possibly need, to include helmets, gloves, eye protection, padded shorts, and quick-release shoes and pedals to allow them to safely egress their bicycles should the need arise. They were also equipped with CamelBaks, first-aid kits and bicycle repair tools and parts. One Soldier was even wearing a reflective PT belt.

At first, the ride was routine, fast, fun and challenging. Both individuals had their heads on a



realized his buddy was bleeding.

"You all right?" he asked as his exhausted friend rolled to a stop next to him.

"Tired, fat and out of shape, but all in all I'm good," he said while gasping for breath and drinking water.

"Looks like something got you. Your shirt's torn and you're

should take point for a while. Though he was not as fit as the faster rider, the Soldier had more experience and pushed the bike and himself to the limits at almost every opportunity. At one point, while negotiating a turn in the middle of a hill, he attempted to ride through an obstacle balanced only his back wheel. Not surprisingly, this resulted in a crash. He laughed it off while his buddy warned, "Maybe you shouldn't push it too hard. We still have to work tomorrow."

"Nah, man, I got this — just slipped out on the loose dirt," he claimed while getting back on his feet and knocking off the dust.

"OK, but if you get hurt being stupid, I'm just gonna laugh and leave you here to figure out where you went wrong!" his buddy said.

"Roger that. I'd expect nothing less," he replied.

After a few sips of water, the men were back on the trail, flying down hills, powering through climbs, careening the turns and having a blast. As they approached an

"Rolling over, he took off his helmet and noticed several large gashes on it. Without it, those gashes could have been on his head."

swivel because the area was usually teeming with deer, hikers, joggers and fellow cyclists. The lead rider was more familiar with the trail and in better condition, often getting away from his buddy and having to wait at the next turn for him to catch up. At one stop, the Soldier

bleeding," the lead cyclist said.

"Eh, cut it a little close to a low-hanging branch on the last turn. It's just a scratch," the other cyclist reported back.

After the brief exchange, the Soldiers decided the slower of the two



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extremely tight and winding part of the trail, the faster rider took off, knowing he would be able to stay within sight and earshot of the slower rider. The slower rider pushed himself to perform better — going faster into turns, leaning the bike over further and staying away from his brakes at all cost. The whole time he was thinking, “I may not be able to pedal as fast, but I can keep up or even pass this guy with better technique and bike-handling skills.”

After a sharp left turn, the trail straightened out and the lead rider came back into view of his slower buddy. The only thing separating them now was about 25 meters and a small wooden bridge. The slower rider wrenched down on his pedals, launching his bike forward while

picking up speed and closing on his buddy. As he approached the bridge, the Soldier decided to push the limits yet again. Shifting his weight, he lifted the rear wheel off the ground to roll over the bridge on only his front tire. The Soldier’s aggressiveness sent him flipping over the handlebars and into some exposed tree roots.

“I’m down,” is all he was able to force out through the pain. Rolling over, he took off his helmet and noticed several large gashes on it. Without it, those gashes could have been on his head. As he made his way back to his feet, his buddy pulled up and asked, “Are you OK?”

The faster rider was shocked his buddy was even standing. His helmet had been torn up, his shirt shredded and covered in blood, and

both hands were bleeding profusely. Adding insult to injury, his bicycle was lodged upside down in a tree, several feet above the trail. They recovered the bicycle and began to make their way down the trail again.

“What happened back there?” the Soldier asked his injured buddy.

“Well,” the injured rider said, “I felt like practicing some physics while pushing the limits. Turns out Newton was right.”

“Newton?” the Soldier questioned.

“Yes, sir,” the injured rider replied. “Newton’s third law of motion. For every action, there is an equal but opposite reaction. This time, my overconfidence led to an equal amount of pain, skin and blood loss — not to mention injury to pride.” ■

FYI

Mountain Biking Safety Tips

There are numerous ways you can improve your mountain bike safety. Many riders will tell you that wearing a helmet is the most important step to staying safe. The second most important step is you should always ride in control of your mountain bike. By riding in control, you’ll not only prevent crashes, but keep others on the trail safe as well. When riding out of control,

you lose the ability to adjust to the terrain as you ride over it. This can — and usually does — result in serious injury to yourself and others.

Follow these helpful guidelines and you’ll remain safe when riding your mountain bike.

1. Gear. Always make sure you wear a helmet and other necessary safety gear for the conditions that you plan to ride in.

2. Never ride beyond your control. There is no shame in walking the areas of the trail where you don’t feel comfortable

riding; never let anyone else tell you there is.

3. Keep your speed under control. Always make sure you keep your speed at a level where you can quickly adjust to any obstacles or changes in the trail.

4. Know your trail. You should never push the limits on trails you aren’t familiar with. Take trails you aren’t familiar with at slow speeds until you learn them better.

5. Slow down around blind corners. If you can’t see past a corner, slow down. You never

know who or what you could run into.

6. Start small then go big. Work your way up to stunts or obstacles. Practice in controlled environment and work your way up to doing the more dangerous stunts.

7. Play it smart. If you start to question what you’re doing, you probably shouldn’t be doing it. Always think about what you are doing and go with your instincts.

*Editor’s note:
Adapted from an article
by Jerry Travers in
adultbicycling.com.*

HERE IT COMES



When riding on an Army installation:

- During hours of darkness or reduced visibility, bicycles must be equipped with an operable headlight or taillight.
- Riders must wear a reflective upper garment.
- Riders must wear a Consumer Product Safety Commission-approved helmet.
- Wearing headphones, earphones or other listening devices is prohibited.
- Yield to traffic when appropriate.
- Go with the traffic flow.
- Obey all traffic laws.
- Look before turning.



READY ...OR NOT?

Ready ... or Not is a call to action for leaders, Soldiers, Army Civilians and Family members to assess their "readiness" for what lies ahead—the known as well as the unknown.

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So are **YOU** ready ... or not?



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Too Big, Too Fast, Too Soon COMPILED BY THE KNOWLEDGE STAFF



I was stationed near Stuttgart, Germany, when I bought my first real motorcycle — a Kawasaki GT 750 — in 1986. Back then, if you had a motorcycle endorsement on your stateside driver's license, they just added it to your U.S. Army, Europe, license. There was no special training or safety courses required. I had an endorsement from my home state of Illinois. However, I "forgot" to mention I was limited to 150cc or smaller engines. Why bother the folks in USAREUR with such a minor detail?

My Kawasaki was a big street bike with shaft drive, air suspension, electronic gauges and a mean-sounding exhaust. I quickly learned it was much faster than the 125cc Yamaha I'd previously owned. I could do 0-80 mph in a block, a big change from a top speed of 60 mph.

One of my friends had a Suzuki 650 Katana, and I was sure I could keep up with him because I had a bigger bike. We decided to ride at Solitude, a curvy road that ran through the hills to a castle. I'd

like to say I got to see the castle, but I didn't because about five minutes into the ride I discovered I didn't know how to corner.

My more experienced friend could corner like famed racer John Surtees, hanging off the bike at speed. I didn't want to be left behind when he accelerated to pass a car, so I tried passing while entering a right-left "S" blind curve. I was going 85 mph when I cleared the car. As

"I was going 85 mph when I cleared the car. As I did, I saw a car in the oncoming lane and quickly swerved right to avoid it."

I did, I saw a car in the oncoming lane and quickly swerved right to avoid it. Just then the road curved left, and I was shocked when I realized I couldn't lean far enough left to make the turn. I froze. I felt I couldn't move the bike. I didn't

know how to countersteer in a turn.

I ran off the road and into a ditch. I tried to keep the bike balanced and slow down on the grass, but it shook violently and I went over the handlebars onto an embankment. I landed on my hands and rolled forward, trying to control my fall. I then slid feet first for a short distance on my butt before my heels caught and I started flipping. Every time I hit the ground, it felt as if I stopped for a split second and then flipped again. Finally, I went up into the air and landed hard on my back. At last I'd stopped. I was wondering where the bike was when I felt the license plate tap my left boot. The bike had tumbled to the bottom of the embankment and stopped just short of my leg.

I was numb all over, but I wasn't scared because everything had happened so quickly. I moved my fingers, toes and head and realized my back wasn't broken. I then sat up and realized I couldn't breathe. I stood up to check the bike and

became dizzy. The driver of the car I'd passed ran up and grabbed my arm and told me to sit. As best as I could understand his German, he chided me for riding too fast, and then told me I was lucky to be alive. I tried to agree, but I



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couldn't get enough wind to talk.

A German doctor who spoke English stopped and checked me. He explained my breathing problems could be due to a cracked rib and I should have X-rays taken. My friend then came back. He'd been waiting for me and wondering where I'd been.

For about a half-hour I could barely breathe. Eventually, I was able to take deeper breaths, but it was very painful. For about a month afterward, my lower back would spasm painfully every time I moved. I couldn't apply backward pressure to my wrists or thrust my arms out without pain, let alone do my job or pushups.

We had a field training exercise the following weekend, so I just got some Tylenol and sucked it up.

God must have saved me because I don't know why the bike didn't crush me during the accident. Solitude has a lot of trees, but, fortunately, there weren't any where I crashed. I paid about 250 Deutsche marks to the towing service and, about a month later, was charged 450 DM by the polizei for the ambulance ride. I was also given a ticket and a few points for my license. But at least I was alive.

Afterward, I spoke to other bikers and learned how to countersteer and corner better. I didn't let the accident

scare me away from riding. However, from then on I rode with a great deal more respect for my machine.

This accident was my fault. I was driving too fast for my level of experience and traffic conditions. I was passing on a blind curve — a very dangerous thing — and thought I knew how to ride when, in reality, I didn't. I assumed a bike's quicker acceleration compared to a car meant I could corner at higher speeds. I rode too big a bike too fast and too soon and almost died proving myself wrong. ■

RIDE FOR YOUR LIFE

The Motorcycle Mentorship Program establishes voluntary installation-level motorcycle associations where less experienced riders and seasoned riders can create a supportive environment of responsible motorcycle riding and enjoyment. This can create positive conduct and behavior and serve as a force multiplier that supports a commander's motorcycle accident prevention program.



MMP
MOTORCYCLE MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

Check out the U.S. Army Combat Readiness Center MMP website for some examples of active mentoring programs.

<https://safety.army.mil/mmp/>



Extra Help COMPILED BY THE KNOWLEDGE STAFF

Several years ago, my unit was deployed to Guatemala to aid in hurricane relief efforts. We deployed with a mix of UH-60A and UH-60L aircraft, all fitted with extended range fuel system tanks because of the lack of refuel locations around the country.

Our unit was a mixed bag of aviators from two companies. We were all going to be operating

up the valleys to assist the trapped locals. Caban was at about 6,500 feet mean sea level elevation and the temperatures were about 28-30 C. I was an overconfident junior W-2 unit trainer flying with a senior W-2 who had never been a pilot in command and with whom I had never flown.

At Caban, we discussed our loads, which were purposely 1,000 pounds lighter than our maximum

up the aircraft and prepared for departure. We came to a 10-foot hover and verified our performance planning. It matched what was planned and the weight onboard, so we made our call to trail and my co-pilot began his in-ground-effect acceleration.

As the aircraft accelerated, it dipped slightly and the nose came up just a little, which is normal and easily fixed with a slight application of forward cyclic. However, my co-pilot didn't apply any more cyclic and, before I realized what was happening, we went from IGE to OGE and had not passed through effective translational lift. We both sensed this at the same time, but our reactions were different.

My co-pilot increased collective and pitched the nose back, killing our airspeed and putting us into turbine gas temperature limiting and drooping the rotor before I could take the controls. I grabbed the controls and pitched the nose forward and, against all natural instincts, pushed the collective down and dove into the valley that was about 200 feet below. I had high ground on the left and right and a set of 20-foot wires along a goat trail at the bottom of the valley. My co-pilot was losing it, saying how sorry he was. He was no help to the crew.

For whatever reason, a conversation with an old standardization pilot ran through my head about a similar situation.



at high altitude and high temperatures for the first time. Even with right-seat rides and several performance planning classes, we managed to have a Class A accident and several close calls — one of which was mine.

We launched out of Guatemala City International Airport as a flight of two UH-60Ls, heading to the town of Caban. It was a typical mission profile of running as much water and food from the location

payload. We conducted a thorough crew brief on our power available, noting we did not have out-of-ground-effect power. Instead, we had the diagonal width of a soccer field to perform an airspeed over altitude takeoff before we went OGE as the field ended at the side of a cliff and dropped into a valley.

I was confident we had discussed the procedure enough and had a good grasp of the situation. We cranked



He had mentioned how he tried to make very minimal inputs into the controls while he was flying, so I managed to set the controls and checked the situation. Luckily, one crew chief had hopped up toward the center console and began to call my rotor, while the other crew chief monitored the wires we were quickly approaching.

“Thankfully, the crew chiefs onboard were on their game because without their help, things might have turned out differently.”

My intention was to get the airspeed up and then add in power, if I had any time remaining. The last rotor call from my crew chief was 88 percent. He said it was starting to climb, so I checked my airspeed and saw it had increased to about 40. I started adding power and hoped for the best. We managed to get enough rotor and speed to stop our descent about 20 feet above the wires. This enabled us to climb over the ridge at the end of the valley and continue with our mission.

Thankfully, the generators stayed online and we had the altitude to use. I never had the chance to jettison the tanks, and my co-pilot didn't get back to being a crew member for about 30 minutes into the flight. Thankfully, the crew chiefs onboard were on their game because without their help, things might have turned out differently. ■

If it happens ...



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Dirty and Used

NAME WITHHELD BY REQUEST

I was a newly appointed safety officer for the 41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team with the Oregon Army National Guard and we were conducting annual training at the Orchard Combat Training Center located south of Boise, Idaho. I hadn't yet attended the Ground Safety Officer Course, so I really didn't know what I was doing. But as an armor officer, I was totally familiar with the multiple live-fire ranges our unit was conducting. I recalled my time as a second lieutenant and all the occasions in which an inspector or VIP visited us on the range. The first thing they wanted to see was our risk assessment.

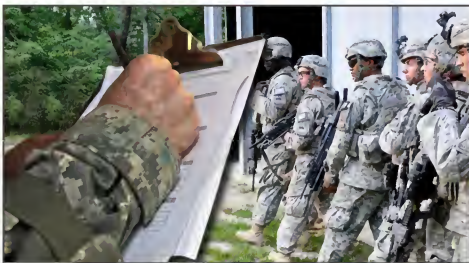
What is a risk assessment? Many Soldiers think they're nothing more than a CYA, or cover your ass. Though they may appear to serve that purpose, risk assessments were designed by the Army primarily to protect Soldiers. Their real purpose is often lost, however, when Soldiers complete a risk assessment solely based on requirements. It becomes an exercise in checking the box and filing it in the range book, ready for any visitor's inspection. With the box checked, we feel we've completed the task and can now go on our merry way. But does this risk assessment do any good for the Soldiers on the ground? This led me to realize that any risk assessment is useless — unless it gets into the hands of the Soldiers.

I must confess I have had some experience filling out risk assessments. As a company

commander, I remember the work I put into them. I filled them out with two thoughts in mind. First, I didn't want any of my Soldiers to get hurt. Second, I wanted to make sure the controls I implemented actually got carried out. Reflecting on my years as a young lieutenant, I remember seeing the risk assessment for the first time when I showed it to a VIP. I often wondered

this tool called the risk assessment and it should be something more than a place filler in the VIP book.

As the unit's safety officer for the annual training exercise at Orchard, I started inspecting the ranges. I walked up to the officer-in-charge, like I had seen so many inspectors do in the past, and asked to see the risk assessment. I've seen the panicked look flash across a young



what good it did if we didn't look at it until someone asked for it.

I have been blessed in my career with outstanding noncommissioned officers who knew what needed to be done to keep Soldiers safe. I truly believe they were the only reason I was able to successfully conduct those ranges without any injury. Pure, dumb luck in getting to work with great NCOs is no way to keep Soldiers safe, though. It worked for me, but I would not want to push my luck. The Army has given us

officer's face when he or she has to tell me the risk assessment is back at the battalion headquarters, where it can be kept nice and clean.

When I was a young Soldier, I know if I had answered like that, I would have been standing at attention, listening to a very one-sided conversation with the inspecting officer. Though that may have been effective, it simply wasn't my style. So I pulled the OIC aside. According to his risk assessment, I asked him about the hazards identified and the controls



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put into place to ensure the safe operation of the ranges. Again, he did not know. I educated that OIC on what his job was — keeping Soldiers safe. The risk assessments are the tools to help him succeed in that endeavor.

I continued drilling the OIC on how he intended to keep the Soldiers safe if he didn't know what to do. I could see it in his eyes; he was relying on the NCOs just as I did. As we have already discussed, 99 times out of 100 that works because the NCOs in our organizations are top notch. But there's the one time out of that 100 somebody does get hurt, so that's not good enough.

The whole point of the risk assessment is to protect Soldiers, not simply to check a box. A risk assessment is written before the event. This allows the commander to look at what can go wrong and make his or her decisions without putting faces to the Soldiers and having to make decisions immediately. Careful decisions made without the pressure of time are way better than decisions made on the fly.

The job doesn't end there, though. The risk assessment is just the start. No one can predict every hazard that may be encountered. In addition to briefing all of the Soldiers on the range about the hazards and controls, the next step is to make the risk assessment a living document. So, as issues are identified, the risk assessment should be updated. A clean piece of paper neatly printed and slid into a document protector is nice, but I will always be happier to see some handwritten additions or deletions. That shows me someone on the ground is using the risk assessment to its highest potential. It shows me that someone is actually using it and thinking about safety.

Remember, keeping Soldiers safe is the goal; it's not filling that little space in the VIP book just for the sake of filling it. I will always smile when I see a risk assessment that's dirty and used. They are like tanks in that regard. They're happiest when they get a little dirty. ■

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Blinded by the Light

LT. COL. JOSEPH A. HARVEY

Director, Driving Directorate, U.S. Army Combat Readiness Center
Fort Rucker, Alabama

As I headed to post that morning, it was like any other day. What I didn't expect, however, was how Daylight Saving Time would affect my commute. As I turned east onto the highway, I was greeted by the blinding sun. My windshield immediately filled with daylight and my visibility was reduced to almost nothing.

My first instinct was to block the sun with my hand so I could see the road just ahead of me. But this method reduced my field of vision to 60 percent at best. I knew there had to be a better way to drive at this time of day, so I did some research. Here are some techniques I found to make my commute less treacherous.

The first method is avoidance. If I leave for work just 30 minutes earlier, I could avoid the sun before it breaks over the horizon. If I'm too lazy to get up earlier, I could instead leave 45 minutes later when the sun is high enough to not impair my vision. If I chose to travel at my regular time rather than earlier or later, another option is to alter my route so that I minimize the amount of time I am driving east into the sun.

A second method is to keep my windshield clean. Dirt or grime on the outside or inside of the windshield causes the light to scatter, increasing the glare. Cleaning my windshield before departing home would help cut down on the glare. Be aware, however, that using the windshield washer in this situation usually exacerbates the problem.

Another tip is to change my driving habits. When driving in these conditions, I should allow



extra space between my car and the vehicles ahead. Because my vision is limited, that extra distance gives me more time to react to any unexpected situation. Driving 5-10 mph slower than the speed limit will also help me in reacting to traffic dangers. In addition, if I allow myself

aftermarket visor that attaches to my vehicle's stock sun visor. Some of these products are adjustable to fill the gaps regular visors do not cover. Others are designed to be transparent, filtering out glare while still allowing you to see the road. Not all products are created equal,

"Even with a good pair of sunglasses, you can still have problems when the sun is in your eyes."

a few extra minutes of travel time, I may not feel rushed in getting to my destination and be less apt to speed or drive aggressively.

Finally, I can filter out the sun using a couple of options. Wearing polarized sunglasses helps filter out the glare, but it's not a complete solution. Even with a good pair of sunglasses, you can still have problems when the sun is in your eyes. I could also purchase an

though, so do a little research to ensure you're purchasing an item with good sun-screening capabilities.

If your commute has you driving into the morning sun, consider incorporating some or all of these tips to improve your safety. After all, there aren't many things on the road that are scarier — or more dangerous — than a driver who can't see where he's going. ■



The Reason for Two

CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER 2 WALLS

Author's note: The following is an account of a situation that occurred during an aircrew training mission in an OH-58D(R) under day visual meteorological conditions in a garrison environment. The left seater was an instructor pilot with more than 2,000 hours in the primary aircraft. The right seater was a 500-hour pilot in command who was demonstrating proficiency in responding to an engine failure at cruise. The crew was in their third hour of flight, conducting evaluations on crew and individual tasks. Both aviators were current in the aircraft and familiar with working with one another, having flown together on numerous occasions. Of note, during this training maneuver, the throttle is rolled to idle to enter the autorotation and must be opened again by 400 feet above ground level. Additionally, the throttle manipulation is accomplished by the IP.

After flying around the military reservation for proficiency training, as well as conducting a landing/pickup zone recon for a future operation, the aircraft cycled through the forward arming and refuel point at another airfield. After refueling, the crew departed along the reservation corridor structure to return to the assigned heliport. Upon return, the crew started a standards evaluation on the right seater to complete the requirements for his Annual Proficiency Readiness Test. The aircrew ran through a myriad of required tasks, then



entered the pattern to conduct required maneuvers — one of which was responding to an engine failure at cruise. Having conducted the required ground/hover prerequisite maneuvers, off they went.

The IP in the left seat demonstrated the first maneuver for proficiency as well as to practice his method of instruction. After successfully terminating with power, the left seater retained the flight controls and conducted another traffic pattern to demonstrate another autorotational decent ending by terminating with power. Over the last several minutes, the pattern had become crowded with aircraft. After yet another successful maneuver, the right seater took the flight controls and departed for another turn in the traffic pattern to demonstrate the same maneuver.

Established at entry altitude and on course for the runway, the crew was advised by air traffic control personnel to expedite the approach and sidestep to the sod

to sequence inbound instrument flight rule traffic. The throttle was rolled to idle while the right seater acknowledged ATC instructions without any verbal communication between the crew. The right seater entered the autorotation and adjusted the airspeed as necessary. The IP was assisting with systems monitoring as well as giving a real-time debrief of the maneuver.

Additionally, ATC was talking to the aircraft performing the autorotation while passing traffic advisories to others in the pattern. Passing through 400 feet AGL, the IP was still calling out system status while continuing to coach through the maneuver. The right seater twice asked, "Throttle open?" with the only response from the left seater being the continued system status callouts. Upon completion of the second query of the throttle position status, the right seater rotated the throttle toward the open position, only to be met by resistance from the left



seater. The right seater applied more force and the throttle rotated to the full open position.

At this point, the left seater stopped talking, ensured the throttle was open and performed only the essential callouts to finish landing the aircraft. The crew ended the maneuver safely and successfully and returned to the parking area for termination.

"After feeling the throttle open in his hand, he finally grasped the situation fully and started listening to the right seater versus only acknowledging that someone was talking."

Upon discussion, the left seater admitted they were so fixated on their MOI and system calls that he was hearing the right seater, but not actually listening. After feeling the throttle open in his hand, he finally grasped the situation fully and started listening to the right seater versus only acknowledging that someone was talking. Additionally, both pilots acknowledged it would have been a wiser decision to just go around and accomplish the maneuver when there wasn't high density or inbound IFR traffic. Both pilots also agreed it is better to debrief a maneuver upon completion and not while it's happening. Such comments interfered with basic aircrew coordination.

Both pilots shared their stories and spread awareness of the deficiencies that occurred in their cockpit. The bottom line is there is a reason why we have two pilots in the aircraft. ■

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